

January 2008

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Resource Protection (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (Federal), whose mission is to protect agricultural, natural resources, property, and the human health and safety of the citizens of Nevada from the threat of injury, damage, or resource loss due to wildlife.

Introduction

During January, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **10** million acres of land under agreement. Additionally, WS assisted **98** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$21,190** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$39,665** in damage to other agricultural resources. During January, coyotes accounted for **\$4,415** in verified losses mostly to livestock and poultry and **729** coyotes were taken with a variety of management methods to resolve these and other ongoing complaints. WS routinely collects blood samples or oral swabs from species taken or handled during normal control activities for monitoring the presence of plague, avian influenza, and other diseases. In January, **56** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of January, 2008.

Resource Protection

State Office

During January 2008, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **17** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**11**), bobcats (**3**), rats (**2**), and rabbits (**1**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.

East District

On January 2nd, WS Virgil Fullerton received a call from a White Pine County sheep producer concerning the loss of one adult ewe valued at \$150. WS Fullerton responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation. WS Fullerton set several traps near the kill sites in an attempt to remove the offending coyotes. Over the next several days, WS Fullerton was able to trap five adult coyotes bringing the damage to an end. No further losses have occurred and WS Fullerton continues to monitor the band of sheep.



On January 2nd, WS Matt Spires was contacted by a White Pine County sheep producer concerning the loss of two adult ewes. WS Spires traveled to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the damage. Due to very bad winter conditions in the area, WS Spires was unable to remove the offending coyotes. On January 10th, the Ely aircraft piloted by Tim Keogh and Crewmember Jerred Taylor responded to location. A total of six coyotes were removed near the band of sheep. No other problems have been reported.

On January 3rd, WS Matt Spires was contacted by a sheep producer in the Eastern part of White Pine County. The rancher told WS Spires that he had lost three adult ewes to coyote predation. WS Spires traveled to the remote location and confirmed the damage. WS Spires set several snares in the immediate area of the losses. January 10th, WS Spires was able to remove one adult coyote by snaring. No further losses have occurred and the rancher is very pleased with WS Spires' efforts.

WS Fullerton responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation.

On January 7th, WS Gilbert Temoke received a call from an Elko County sheep producer concerning the loss of four adult ewes valued at \$600. WS Temoke responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation. WS Temoke set several traps near the kill sites in an attempt to remove the offending coyotes. WS Temoke was able to call in and shoot two adult coyotes the same day as the losses. On January 11, one more adult coyote was trapped. No further losses have occurred and WS Temoke continues to monitor the band of sheep.



On January 14th, Mt. Lion Specialist Jim Buhler and WS Derril Fry returned to Spruce Mountain in an attempt to capture a lion for NDOW Project 17. NDOW Project 17 is a project funded by fees assessed on all big game hunt applications to protect mule deer and elk from coyote and mountain lion predation. Earlier this winter, WS Buhler successfully tracked and removed an adult female lion from the same area. At that time WS Buhler observed the tracks of an adult male but due to bad weather conditions, was unable to capture the lion. Since there was a number of deer and elk in the immediate area, WS Buhler felt the lion would stay in the area. On January 14th, WS Buhler and WS Fry found the tracks of the adult male lion. After following the tracks for several miles, the lion was treed and dispatched. The lion was an adult male weighing approximately 150 pounds. The age of the lion was only three years old but the cat was in excellent condition. The lion had recently

killed one adult mule deer doe that was observed while pursuing the lion. As directed by NDOW, the lion was skinned and turned over to NDOW in Ely.

On January 14th, District Supervisor Joe Bennett received a call from a White Pine Veterinarian Clinic concerning the loss of some poultry to coyotes. DS Bennett traveled to the location North of Ely and confirmed the loss of 12 chickens, 21 domestic ducks, 15 geese, 10 turkeys, and 10 pea fowl. The total losses amounted to \$1,055. The resource owner reported the losses had occurred over about a one month period. He also reported that on several occasions he had witnessed the coyotes in the yard but was unable to shoot them. DS Bennett called several stands with negative results. Since the property behind the Veterinarian clinic was signed up for aerial hunting, the Ely aircraft piloted by Tim Keogh and crew member Jerred Taylor responded to location on three occasions. Since the losses occurred near the Ely Airport, the plane was used for a short time as it was coming and going to other requests. The plane was able to remove three adult coyotes and no further losses have taken place. Technical assistance was also provided and the local veterinarian was very pleased with the results and advice.

On January 16th, District Supervisor Joe Bennett received a call from a home owner North of Ely concerning a problem with a bobcat. The homeowner reported that the bobcat had been hanging around the house and had even recently starting coming onto the porch and looking into the windows. The reporting party mentioned that they were fearful the bobcat might bite them. DS Bennett traveled to the location and confirmed the story. A large cage trap was placed near the front porch. On January 25th, a large adult male bobcat was captured. No further problems have been reported and the homeowner was very pleased with the service provided. Technical assistance was also provided to help prevent future problems.



On January 17th, the Elko airplane piloted by Ken Baer and Crewmember Wayne Rowley flew on a ranch in West Elko County. The ranch owner reported a loss of 9 ewes valued at \$1,350. The loss was attributed to coyote predation. On their first pass the Elko crew spotted 5 coyotes leaving the sheep. Those coyotes were removed along with 31 others from the surrounding area.

On January 25th, a call came into the East District office concerning some coyote depredation in Northern Lincoln County. Two producers reported the loss of 18 ewes valued at \$2,100. Due to State budget cuts and a Wildlife Specialist position being temporarily held vacant in this area, the Ely aircraft piloted by Tim Keogh and crew member Jerred Taylor responded to location. With the assistance of WS Fullerton as ground crew, a total of six coyotes were removed near the bands of sheep. The area will be monitored for further problems by WS Fullerton. Both sheep producers were very pleased with the results.

During January, WS Gary Strader reported very bad weather conditions on the NDOW Project 17. Despite the conditions, WS Strader was able to remove several coyotes. During the bad weather conditions, WS Strader reported that he was able to get caught up on much needed equipment repairs and maintenance.

West District

On January 1st, several livestock producers from Humboldt County reported that several groups of coyotes had moved in around their calving areas. One producer reported that one calf (valued at \$400) may have been killed by coyotes. On January 2nd, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay conducted an aerial hunt on several calving areas. During the short flight a total of 73 coyotes were removed. The aerial crew did not lose a single coyote during the aerial hunt and most coyotes were removed on the first pass. The West District's aerial crew is a fine tuned working team that is well appreciated by co-workers and livestock producers for their effectiveness in the field. WS John Peter located several of the coyotes for the aerial crew, while proving ground support.



During the short flight a total of 73 coyotes were removed.

During the week of January 7th thru January 11th, WS George Hansen has been busy fighting deep snow trying to protect livestock in Lander County. During the week WS Hansen removed a total of three coyotes by method of calling and shooting. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in this area.

On January 8th, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial hunting activities around a spring lambing area north of Austin in Lander County. This area had no livestock present but the cooperators requested preventative flying to remove coyotes before the ewes moved in the area. The aerial crew flew with 100% snow cover, but unfortunately no coyotes were found during the short flight. Often times spring lambing ranges may hold only a few coyotes, but as ewes start lambing, coyotes travel from all over to feed on young vulnerable lambs.

On January 9th, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. and Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders spent the morning conducting a waterfowl survey in the Truckee Meadows. Each year WS Biologists perform this winter waterfowl survey in conjunction with the Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel.

During the week of January 14th thru January 18th, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Sam Sanders performed pre-treatment observations for a starling removal project at a large County landfill 15 miles east of Reno. At the landfill, 2,500 starlings have caused an estimated \$6,000 in increased labor costs to clean and run equipment for the year.



During the week of January 14th thru January 18th, WB Sanders caught and removed four problematic raccoons from the Reno/Sparks area using cage live traps. All four occurrences were a human health and safety issue with the problem raccoons living under residential buildings. WB Sanders also removed one coyote, by use of trail snare, which was causing a safety concern at a water treatment facility in Reno. Urban wildlife conflicts will be ongoing.

During the week of January 14th thru January 18th, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. conducted a routine "ride along" with Wildlife Specialist Ben Miller on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project. Deep snows hampered travel, so all calling stands and equipment checks were done by long snowshoe excursions. During the week three coyotes were removed by method of

voice howling and shooting and one coyote was removed by method of trail snares. The coyotes removed were all up near wintering mule deer herds. During the week no fresh mt. lion sign was observed, so the removal of 11 mt. lions since April appears to be working to keep deer protected from mt. lions. Several mt. lion snares were placed in rocky corridors where mt. lions travel in case one moves in the area. During the week 226 mule deer and six bighorn sheep were observed from the ground. This is the highest number of deer observed on the ground, since protection efforts were initiated.

During the week of January 14th thru January 18th, WS Don Capelli has been providing mandatory ground support for the aerial crew and checking his trapline near wintering sheep bands. During the week WS Capelli removed two coyotes with snares. WS Capelli will continue to protect seven sheep bands in Lander and Nye Counties.

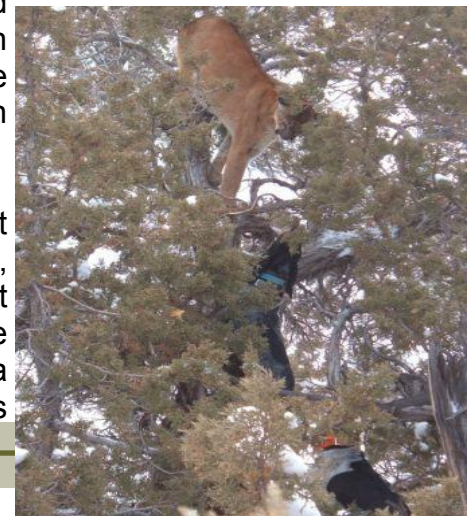
On January 15th, WS George Hansen requested aerial support on a cow/calf operation in Lander County. The cattle producer reported the loss of two calves (valued at \$800) by coyotes. On January 15th, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew around the calving area and removed a total of 36 coyotes. The aerial crew was after one coyote in heavy brush and as the plane turned around to pick up the coyote it ran into one of WS Hansen's snares. WS Hansen removed an additional four coyotes by method of trail snares. No further livestock losses have been reported, since the removal of the coyotes.

During the week of the January 22nd thru January 25th, Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders sent bird remains to the Smithsonian to be identified. The parts were remains from a bird that was struck at a large airport in Washoe County. The bird was later identified to be that of a mourning dove, which has remained in the area do to anthropogenic food sources. The rest of the week, WB Sanders provided technical assistance for a variety of animal complaints, helped a golf course with a migratory bird permit application, and trapped and removed several skunks that were living in and digging up a home owner's flower bed.

On January 16th and January 17th, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay were busy flying 10 bands of sheep located in Washoe, Pershing, Nye, and Lander Counties. During the two day hunt a total of 31 coyotes were removed. Every one of these sheep bands had experienced some losses due to coyotes. The onset of deep snows and cold temperatures have prompted coyotes to move in around the winter sheep bands. This year the coyote population has really decreased (along with rabbits) in western Nevada, but a majority of the coyotes left all seem to be causing problems for livestock producers. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 18th, a livestock producer from Lander County requested flying near a ranch property. The aerial crew flew 4.8 hours, but even with good snow cover the aerial crew could not find one coyote from the air. It is very rare for the aerial crew to fly and not find coyotes. WS Don Capelli provided ground support during aerial operations.

On January 22nd a livestock producer from Lyon County reported that one ewe (valued at \$300) had been killed by a mt. lion. On January 22nd, Mt. Lion Specialist Tom Kilby inspected the situation and confirmed that a large male mt. lion had killed the ewe and then headed towards the East Walker River. MLS Kilby released his tracking hounds and after a really tough chase the hounds caught the mt. lion. MLS Kilby eased his



way along the rocky bluffs and dispatched the big mt. lion. The mt. lion was taken to be weighted and it tipped the scales at 171 pounds. MLS Kilby estimated the mt. lion at 8 years of age. A wore out radio collar was around the mt. lions neck and it is probable that this mt. lion was one of the research mt. lions that moved in from Bishop California. No further livestock losses have been reported, since the removal of the mt. lion. This particular area has bighorn sheep down the river several miles, so the removal of the mt. lion may help other ungulate wildlife species located nearby.

On January 22nd, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning hunt around several calving areas in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers reported that four calves (valued at \$1,600) had been killed by coyotes. During the early morning flight a total of 41 coyotes were removed from several calving areas. The aerial crew located two large groups of coyotes during the hunt. A group of 11 and 15 coyotes each were spotted and promptly removed. Livestock producers were pleased with the aerial crew's results and to date no further calf losses have been reported in this area. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the week of the January 22nd thru January 25th, WS Ben Miller pressed on protection efforts by checking what is now a snowshoe trapline on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (hunt unit 014). WS Miller was unable to return to his camp this week as the deep snows have hampered road travel, so the district office gave him another camp trailer to use. During the week WS Miller trail snared eight coyotes in the deep snow. WS Miller is snowshoeing 3-5 miles a day checking trail snares around wintering deer yards. WS Miller is experiencing a truly endurance type trapline with no complaints. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer in this area.

On January 28th, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. wrote an informational letter to water use managers in Washoe and Lyon County about the damage that can be caused by rodents (including non-native beavers) to irrigation systems. Recently a levy broke and flooded the community of Fernley and there has been speculation that perhaps rodents had a hand in "softening" the levy.

On January 23rd, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew two sheep bands in Nye County. The livestock producer reported that they have had sporadic losses on the two sheep bands. The aerial crew flew for 5.0 hours with 100% snow cover and could not find a single coyote. The aerial crew did locate three dead ewes, but the carcasses had not been "opened up" by animals. The aerial crew left this particular area and flew along a cattle ranch near Austin and removed 15 coyotes while headed back to the hanger. The aerial crew will continue to fly these two sheep bands in the future.

On January 23rd, Pilot Brent Taggart and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay were requested to fly a winter sheep band near Empire in Washoe County. During the flight a total of five coyotes (including a pair eating on a dead ewe) were removed. WS John Peter removed three additional coyotes by method of trail snares and M-44. No further livestock losses have been reported but as soon as the sheep move into a new area, new coyotes will ultimately start killing sheep. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the week of the January 22nd thru January 25th, Mt. Lion Specialist Tom Kilby continued protection efforts on a relocated population of bighorn sheep in Washoe County. The Nevada Department of Wildlife requested that any mt. lions found inhabiting the protection area (hunt unit 022) be promptly removed. Biologists reported that one bighorn sheep had previously been killed (value

\$2,500) but is unknown what animal had killed the bighorn. On January 23rd, MLS Kilby found where a female and possibly some juvenile mt. lions had killed and fed upon a mule deer. MLS Kilby hunted the canyon the following day and his pack of hounds took off in a few different directions and by the time it was all said and done MLS Kilby removed four mt. lions. MLS Kilby reported that the mt. lion carcasses had literally rolls of fat on them, so they have been eating well in this area. MLS Kilby also found sign where another large male and possibly another female inhabit the area. MLS Kilby confirmed that five (possibly six) mt. lions were present around the bighorn sheep release site. Typically relocated bighorn sheep are very vulnerable to predators until they have time to acclimate to their new surroundings. It is theorized that if bighorn sheep are harassed by predatory wildlife immediately following their release then they may just migrate to another mt. range miles away. Protection efforts will be ongoing as per NDOW's request.



On January 28th, WS George Hansen accidentally caught a red fox while checking coyote equipment in Lander County. WS Hansen immediately released the red fox unharmed as he was targeting coyotes and not red foxes. In recent years red fox sightings appear to be increasing in western Nevada. Red fox in other portions of the country have been well documented in preying on ground nesting birds such as sage grouse.

On January 30th, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. conducted a routine field inspection with Pilot Brent Taggart, Crew Member Brandon VanderMay and WS John Peter. Aerial operations were conducted on several calving areas in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers have been continually requesting coyote removal from their calving grounds, but the weather has not been cooperative for flying. During the afternoon flight WS Peter and DS Spencer located 12 coyotes for the aerial crew and they found and removed every one of them. The aerial crew removed a total of 38 coyotes during the afternoon hunt. DS Spencer will continue to conduct field inspections for his employees.

On January 28th, workers from a community property in Clark County called WS Shaun Trudell and reported that there was a pack of four coyotes chasing a herd of bighorn sheep. WS Trudell went to the location of the complaint and the workers reported that shortly after they ended their phone conversation the coyotes caught and killed one small yearling ram (valued at \$2,500). The workers reported that they tried harassing the coyotes away but the coyotes paid no attention to them. WS Trudell received another call from the same workers a few days later that they once again witnessed coyotes chasing the bighorn sheep. No protection efforts are currently employed to protect bighorn sheep in this area. WS periodically receives complaints about coyotes chasing, harassing and killing bighorn sheep. Coyotes kill hundreds of domestic sheep each year, so it is no surprise that they also readily consume bighorn sheep.

Through out the Month of January, Assistant West District Supervisor (ADS) Jack Sengl and Wildlife Specialist (WS) Shaun Trudell continued American coot damage management in the Las Vegas Valley utilizing Alpha Chloralose and firearms. The coots consume and defecate on the expensive turf which burns the grass often requiring expensive replacement.

During the first week of January, Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Jack Sengl assisted the Ne-

vada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) with incident command related issues regarding a mountain lion that was darted by animal control officers and needed to be transferred to NDOW custody. The lion was initially observed lying on the back porch of a residence by the home owner's child.



During the last week of January, ADS Sengl and Wildlife Specialist (WS) Luke Barto conducted a site visit at a prison. A new construction site at the prison is experiencing insulation pecking and defecation damage caused by common ravens. Technical assistance and steps for direct control assistance by Wildlife Services was provided.

Developing Methods

Nothing to report.

Valuing and Investing in People

On January 5th, a levy broke along an irrigation system near the town of Fernley that resulted in major flooding for local residents. Staff Biologist Jonathan LaCombe and Wildlife Disease Biologist Zack Bowers assisted with blankets and other basic necessities to residents who were now homeless and enduring difficult times. SB LaCombe spent the remainder of the day filling sandbags to help divert the rising water. It's nice to know that when emergencies happen people still care enough to lend a helping hand. Hats off to SB LaCombe and WDB Bowers.

During the week of January 22, WS Barto was welcomed to the West District with early morning coot work. WS Barto was pried away from the Arizona program to unbury ADS Sengl and WS Trudell. Luke has assisted Nevada in the past and worked in the Alaska program prior to his Arizona appointment. WS Barto has an exceptional work ethic and has already proved his worth. Please assist me in welcoming Luke back to Nevada.



Information and Communication

On January 29th, Elko pilot Ken Baer traveled to Cedar City Utah for stall/spin training. Stall/spin training is a very important part of our aviation safety training.

During the week of January 21st, DS Joe Bennett traveled to Las Vegas and attended State of Nevada training. The training was mandatory training for supervisors concerning supervising state employees.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

A follow up e-mail notice on Martin Luther King Day was received by program personnel on the 18th of January. Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act in 1994. The new theme which is emphasized is "Make it a Day ON...NOT a Day Off! Personnel are asked to take part in service projects, conducting food drives, painting schools and community centers, recruiting mentors for needy youth, bringing meals to homebound neighbors and serving in homeless shelters.

Future Meetings and Events

The Nevada WS Program will have a State Conference in 2008. The meeting will be held in late August 2008 at Lamoille Canyon in Elko County. The last State Conference was held in Reno in 2006.



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Wildlife Services



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